

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 02666 081715Z

ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9593

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AID FOR AFR/CAWA

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TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, CT, US

SUBJ: CAE ATTACK ON US HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE

REF: BANGUI 2661

1. IN THE HALF-HOUR PRECEEDING THE DIRECT BROADCAST FROM FRANCE OF ANTENNE II'S CORONATION REPORT ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 7, A PANEL OF CENTRAL AFRICAN JOURNALISTS CHAIRED BY DR. BARTHELEMY YANGMNGO, THE MINISTER FOR RADIO AND TELEVISION, ROUNDLY ATTACKED THE UNITED STATES FOR ITS POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA. MINISTER YANGONGO MADE REPEATED REFERENCE TO FOREIGN PRESS AGENCIES SUPPORTED BY A CERTAIN SUPER POWER WHO HAD TRIED TO DISCREDIT THE EMPIRE AND THE CORONATION. HE SAID THAT THE GOCAE WANTED TO INFORM ITS PEOPLE OF THESE ATTACKS AND TO RESPOND TO THEM IN THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY HAD BEEN MADE -- TIT FOR TAT. HE SAID THAT THE SUPER POWER WHICH WAS TRYING TO TEACH CENTRAL AFRICA A LESSON WAS IN NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 BANGUI 02666 081715Z

POSITION TO DO SO GIVEN ITS OWN DEPLORABLE "TENTACULAR" AND "MEPHISTOPHELEAN" POLICIES WHICH AIMED AT DOMINATION AND INTERVENTION IN AFRICA.

2. YANGONGO THEN FOCUSED ON VARIOUS ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES INCLUDING THE EXECUTION OF THE ROSENBERGS, THE KILLINGS AT KENT STATE, THE USE OF

DEFOLIANTS IN VIETNAM AND THE ASSASSINATIONS AND "POGROMS" OF THE PAST. HE ALSO ATTACKED THE SUPER POWER FOR ITS RACIST POLICIES. HE SAID THAT FOUR OUT OF FIVE MURDER VICTIMS WERE BLACK; THAT 25 MILLION BLACKS LIVED IN PERMANENT FEAR PURSUED BY BLOOHHOUNDS; THAT CRIMINALS AND DRUG ADDICTS PROSPERED ON THE STREETS LIKE "FOXES IN A CHICKEN COOP" AND THAT DESPITE THIS SUPER POWER'S SUPPORT FOR THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF MAN, ITS BLACK MINORITY WERE VICTIMS OF POLITICAL REPRESSION. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY, HOW COULD A SMALL HANDFUL OF PEOPLE REPRESENTING CERTAIN PRESS AGENCIES BLAME AFRICANS FOR NOT OBSERVING THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

3. YANGONGO THEN WENT ON TO PRAISE THE SOVIET UNION FOR ITS POLICIES OF RESPECT AND SAID THE GOCAL WOULD BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL TO FRANCE FOR ITS GENERIOUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT. THE CAE, HE SAID, WANTED COOPERATION WITH ALL, BUT IT MUST BE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY.

4. FINALLY, YANGONGO LAUNCHED INTO A DEFENSE OF THE EMPIRE. HE NOTED THE HUMAN RIGHTS GUARANTEES OF THE CONSTITUTION AND THE OATH HIS MAJESTY HAD TAKEN TO DEFEND THESE RIGHTS. HE INSISTED THAT THE EMPIRE WAS A LIBERAL MONARCHY AND THAT ALL ITS INSTITUTIONS WERE DEMOCRATIC AND PARLIAMENTARY AND THAT ITS PURPOSE WAS TO BRING STABILITY AND PROSPERITY TO THE PEOPLE OF CENTRAL AFRICA.

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PAGE 03 BANGUI 02666 081715Z

5. COMMENT: THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL SHOW WERE VERY MUCH MORE DISCREET AND WHILE THEY DEFENDED THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE EMPIRE, THEY WERE RELATIVELY LOW-KEY IN THEIR ATTACKS ON EXTERNAL CRITICISM. THEY DID NOT ENGAGE IN THE LEFTIST RHETORIC WHICH CHARACTERIZED YANGONGO'S PRESENTATION. YANGONGO, WHO IS RUSSIAN EDUCATED, TOOK AN UNQUIVABLE HARD LINE BOTH IN HIS DENUNCIATION OF IMPERIALIST AMBITIONS IN THE THIRD WORLD AND IN HIS SPECIFIC ATTACKS ON AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT YANGONGO WAS TOLD TO MAKE THIS PRESENTATION BY THE EMPEROR, WHO AS WE HAVE EARLIER REPORTED, IS CONCERNED BY THE SUBSTANCE AND TONE OF WESTERN PRESS REPORTING OF THE CORONATION. HOWEVER, YANGONGO SPLKE WITHOUT NOTES, WE DOUBT THAT THE EMPEROR AUTHORIZED THE SPECIFICS. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE TWO MAJOR THEMES OF YANGONGO'S PRESENTATION: THE RIGHT OF CENTRAL AFRICA TO DEVELOP ITS OWN INSTITUTIONS AND THE INADMISSIBILITY OF FOREIGN LECTURING ARE OPINIONS WHICH BOKASSA HIMSELF HOLDS. WE WOULD EXPECT THE GOCAL TO RESPOND FORCEFULLY IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND WEEKS TO ATTACKS UPON IT, BUT WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THIS REACTION WILL GO BEYOND THE KIND OF RHETORIC USED LAST NIGHT. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT SEVERAL AMERICAN JOURNALISTS AND THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN THEIR REPEATED REFERENCES

TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE CAE HAVE TOUCHED A RAW NERVE.
IF WE DO NOT WISH OUR EFFORTS TO BE COUNTER/PRODUCTIVE, IT WOULD
PROBABLY BE BEST TO ALLOW A CERTAIN TIME TO PASS BEFORE WE RETURN
TO THIS ISSUE, WHILE WAITING TO SEE WHETHER IN FACT BOKASSA
DOES DELIVER ON HIS REPEATED PROMISES TO LIBERALIZE HIS REGIME
AND TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE HUMAN PERSON.
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